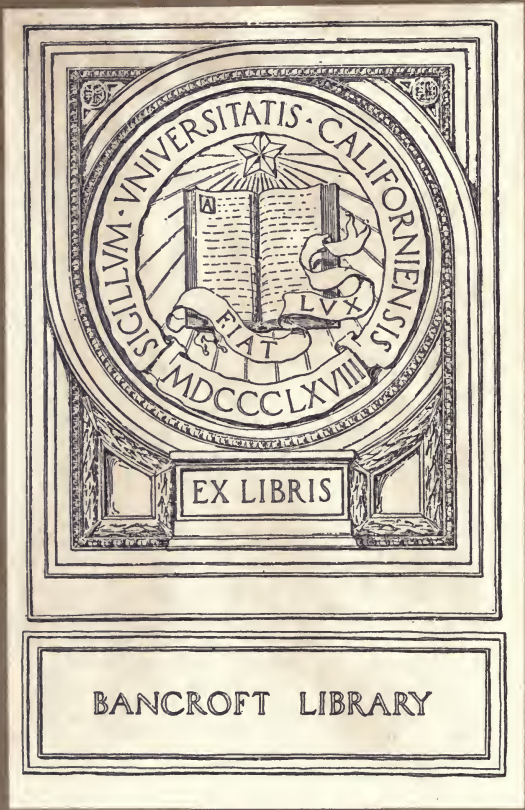


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of the author.

PORTRAITS OF COLUMBUS.

MONOGRAPH

BY

JAMES D. BUTLER, LL. D.

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MADISON, WIS., 1883.

*The Bancroft Library*

*No. 15771*

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PORTRAITS OF COLUMBUS.

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MONOGRAPH

BY

JAMES D. <sup>avie</sup>BUTLER, LL.D. 1815-1905.

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MADISON, WIS., 1883.

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Harcroft Library PORTRAITS OF COLUMBUS.

BY PROF. JAMES D. BUTLER, LL. D.

*Governor Fairchild:*<sup>1</sup>

In behalf of the Historical Society, I have the honor — and it is a very pleasant duty — to thank you for your generous gift. Nothing you could bring us from the ancient kingdom where you have so ably represented our country, could be more acceptable to us. It is a present exactly in keeping with our endeavors during a whole generation. One by one have we hung up in our Picture Gallery the likenesses of our State pioneers, as well as of others famous each after his own fashion in our annals. But the grand link thus far lacking in the chain of our pictorial history, you were among the first to observe to be missing, and you have made haste to supply that missing link.

In this labor of love you have followed the footsteps of an illustrious predecessor. When Jefferson was the American minister in Paris, about 1784, he engaged an artist to take the best copy possible of what passed for the most authentic Columbian likeness in existence, — the Medici portrait in Florence<sup>2</sup> — and the original, as most critics think, of the present you bring us to-day. This painting was with Jefferson during his Presidency, and he writes about it as one of his chief jewels at Monticello in 1814. In his drawing room there, it hung the second among four portraits on the left as one entered. If Virginia had had any Historical Society in his time,<sup>3</sup> he must have delighted to enshrine his

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<sup>1</sup> Hon. Lucius Fairchild, while United States Minister at Madrid, admiring the fine Yanez portrait of Columbus, in the Spanish National Library, closely resembling the famous likeness in the Florentine Gallery, he at once caused a copy to be made by the eminent artist, M. Hernandez, of that city, for the special purpose of adding it to the art collection of our Historical Society. It was a happy thought, promptly and gracefully carried into execution.

L. C. D.

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson's Works, Vol. VI, pp. 343, 375. Domestic Life, Sarah N. Randolph.

<sup>3</sup> The Virginia Historical Society was not founded until five years after Jefferson's death, or in 1831.

pictorial memorial within its walls, deeming it as he wrote, "a matter even of public concern that our country should not be without it."

What has become of this Jeffersonian relic, is a question we naturally ask. I have corresponded regarding it with Lossing, who has illustrated so many of our worthies, and with Parton, the latest biographer of Jefferson. Neither of them could give me any inkling of its fate. I next wrote to Miss Sarah N. Randolph, a great grand-daughter of Jefferson, and the author of a volume on his Domestic Life. In her answer were these words:

"The Columbus and other portraits having been reserved at the sale of Mr. Jefferson's effects, were sent to Boston, where it was supposed, there would be a better chance of selling them to advantage. They were intrusted to Mr. Coolidge, who married my aunt. They are both now dead, and I wrote to their daughter, telling her of your desire to know about the Columbus. She writes that she knows nothing of it, and would not know that such a picture had been at Monticello, but for the fact that it is mentioned in my book." "I have often," Miss Randolph continues, wished to trace this picture up; but suppose there is now no hope of doing so. My uncle has been dead only three years, and a single word from him would have told all."

Thus my research seemed in vain. Notwithstanding it has been my fortune to discover the lost likeness; if not America, at least its discoverer. The word *Boston* in Miss Randolph's letter put me on the track. Had I been in that city I would have gone at once to the building of the Massachusetts Historical Society assured that all historic gems must gravitate thither. But I was a thousand miles away, and so I scrutinized their publications. In their Collections (3rd series, Vol. VII., p. 285), I came to a notice of a portrait of Columbus, presented by Israel Thordike,<sup>1</sup> and in their Proceedings (Vol. II., pp. 23, 25), I observed

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<sup>1</sup> To the same merchant prince of Boston, Harvard owes the gift of a treasure, which the German Professor, Ebeling, had been fifty years in collecting, and which, at his death, was the finest in existence, namely, nearly four thousand volumes of books relative to America, and almost ten thousand maps, charts and views.



that the donor, in his letter of presentation (Nov. 26, 1835), described the Columbian portrait as "a copy from an original in the Gallery of Medicis (sic), at Florence, for Thomas Jefferson."

It was a pleasure to ascertain that Jefferson's favorite hangs just where he would have it—in the hall of that Society which has done most to elucidate the annals of the country over which Jefferson presided, and of the Continent which Columbus revealed.

In 1814, Mr. Delaplaine, father of our townsman, was publishing in Philadelphia his "Repository of Distinguished Americans." He made strenuous efforts to obtain for his frontispiece a drawing from the Jeffersonian portrait. Failing in this endeavor, he was forced to have recourse to a painting by Macella, copied from some fancy portrait,<sup>1</sup> cased in plate armor, and lettuce ruffs, with features as divergent as the costume from the genuine type.

Investigations of every sort regarding Columbus are now seasoned by special seasonableness, inasmuch as we have already entered the last decade before the fourth centennial anniversary of the great discovery,—an era that will be celebrated from pole to pole.

In tracing the Jeffersonian portrait of Columbus, I first became aware that no monograph on the general subject of Columbian portraits was discoverable in English, and scarcely in any language. The only article I found was a gossipy letter in a New York daily paper from Irving in his old age, which showed that he had never given the subject more than superficial attention. In Poole's corpulent Index to seven thousand volumes of periodicals, you can detect no single paper concerning portraits of Columbus. My treatment of the theme then is tilling a virgin field.

My investigation has brought me into correspondence with all the world. Among those to whom I owe special thanks are General B. Alvord, U. S. A., of Washington; Professor Norton, of Harvard University; Mary Cowden Clarke; the United States ministers or consuls in Mexico, Lisbon and Genoa; Chief Justice Daly, of New York; H. A. Homes, W. C. Todd, Bela Hubbard,

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<sup>1</sup> Larousse—"Purely fanciful." Jefferson's Work's, Vol. VI, pp. 343, 375.

E. M. Barton, Miss Sarah N. Randolph, A. H. Hoyt, Mellen Chamberlain, William H. Wyman, George H. Moore, John Ward Dean, John R. Bartlett, Ralph U. James, and the Duke of Veragua himself.

The oldest Columbian portrait of which I discover any trace in the United States, now hangs in the New York Senate Chamber at Albany. It was presented to the State in 1784, by Mrs. Maria Farmer, a grand-daughter of Jacob Leisler, Governor of New York, in 1639. According to her statement the painting had been in her family for a hundred and fifty years. It may then have been brought from Europe more than two centuries ago. In one corner it bears the inscription, "anno [1592] or 1492, Aet. 23." This legend may indicate the year in which the copy was taken, and the age of the copyist.<sup>1</sup> This likeness is of a younger man than we can believe Columbus to have been when his first portrait was painted, and it is not now generally deemed authentic.

Your gift is small to the eye, but it is great to the mind. I for one could not appreciate its value till after considerable research.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Catalogue N. Y. State Library, p. 45. Magazine of Amer. History vol. V, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> During my investigation, engravings of Columbian portraits have come to my knowledge in great numbers. The oldest of all painted likenesses, the Florentine Uffizi, dating from 1568, or probably from an earlier year. A photograph of this has been ordered from Florence. Among those owned by the State Historical Society are the following:

1. The Giovan wood cut, dating from 1575 or '78.
2. The Yanez portrait from Madrid, unscoured.
3. The same, scoured.
4. The De Bry likeness, Frankfort, 1595.
5. The Capriolo likeness, Rome, 1596.
6. The Naples likeness, by Parmigiano.
7. The Munoz likeness.
8. The bust in Genoa.
9. The statue in Genoa.
10. The Bryant and Gay likeness from an old map.
11. The Harper Magazine likeness.
12. The Bibliotheque National, p. 150, Goodrich.
13. The Albany likeness.
14. The Herrera, p. 219, Goodrich.
15. The Venetian Mosaic.
16. A German likeness, p. 332, Goodrich.
17. The Bernardo likeness.
18. Columbus as St. Christopher, p. 153, Goodrich.
19. The Jeffersonian Columbus in Boston, heliotype.
20. The Crispin de Pas., photograph.

The so-called likenesses of Columbus are mostly fancy sketches. As men have made to themselves gods, each after his own national image, so have they portrayed their heroes, and not least our heroic discoverer. The great navigator as represented at Madrid, in the palace of the Duke of Berwick-Alba, is seated on a throne, and arrayed in high colored silks and embroidery, while his features are no more true to nature than his dress. This painting is said to be a copy from a likeness in Havana, which has often been sought for but always in vain.<sup>1</sup> It is the original of the largest known Columbian engraving which bears this inscription: "The original was painted in America by Van Loo." *El cuadro original fue pintado en America por Van Loo.* When was Van Loo in America? The gods, one would think, must annihilate both time and space to make the owner of such a sham happy. Yet a copy of this engraving was highly prized by the late Mr. Lenox, and now adorns his library in Central Park. He supposed that the Duke of Alba portrait had been painted in the lifetime of Columbus.<sup>2</sup>

In the Cuban consistorial hall at Havana, Columbus appears dressed as a familiar of the inquisition.<sup>3</sup> In one likeness he resembles an effeminate Narcissus; in many others the costume and arrangement of hair are in a style unknown to his century, while his lineaments are treated with no less license than his vestments. Seeing Columbus thus transformed — or rather deformed — we are reminded of personal caricatures in Punch, of Mark Twain, asking "Is he dead?" or of a heathen idol baptized with the name of a saint, so that what was carved for Jupiter becomes Jew Peter.

More than one canvas passing for a Columbian portrait is a palimpsest; that is, it shows traces of a former name having been erased in order that the word Columbus might be inscribed. Productions betraying such an *alias* remind us of a dinner scene in Mark Twain's "Tramp Abroad." An American complained that

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<sup>1</sup> Carderera, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cat. of Ticknor's Spanish Books in Boston Public Library, p. 95. Carderera, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Magazine of Amer. History*, Vol. 1, p. 510.

having ordered champagne, he had been served with *vin ordinaire*. The steward took the bottle—saw that it bore the words *vin ordinaire*, and acknowledged the mistake. He then called a waiter to bring a champagne label, and pasted it on in place of the words objected to, saying, "You now have, sir, what you ordered, and as good champagne as we ever furnish."

About thirty years ago, Judge Ira Barton, a member of the American Antiquarian Society, in Worcester, Massachusetts, seeing in the picture gallery at Naples a portrait by Parmigiano which was called Columbus, obtained a copy of it, painted by an Italian artist named Scardino, and gave it to the Society for hanging in its hall. But the painter was only three years old at the death of Columbus; and so even in the view of its donor this painting was only an ideal likeness. In truth, it is not so much as that. According to Professor C. E. Norton, of Cambridge, "it is no longer held by any competent critic to be an authentic likeness." The Spanish painter and investigator, Carderera, goes further, and in disproof of its pretensions discourses as follows:

"We now come to notice the famous portrait which hangs in the Royal *Museo Borbonico* at Naples, attributed to the elegant pencil of *Parmigiano*. As this celebrated painting has of late misled very respectable persons, and has been reproduced in engravings at Naples, as well as in France and England,<sup>1</sup> it seems necessary to subject it to a careful analysis. Bechi, who has described this beautiful work, confesses that the eminent artist had to paint the portrait from imagination. M. Jomard, of the French National Library, is of the same opinion, and yet advised the Genoese nobles commissioned to raise a statue of the great man that their artists should inspire themselves at this notable printing. We must, in many points, differ from the opinions of the two distinguished persons we have just mentioned. Having carefully examined the portrait in Naples, we have come to doubt whether the Parmesan artist intended it to be a likeness of Colum-

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<sup>1</sup> This Neapolitan likeness was reproduced as the frontispiece in one of the volumes of Prescott's "*Ferdinand and Isabella*." It was engraved in 1882 by George E. Perine, expressly for the *American Eclectic Magazine*. It was an odd blunder to make a misnomer the subject of so fine a work of art.

bus at all. There is scarcely any point of resemblance between the authentic [word?] portraits of the Admiral which so clearly reveal the frank manner, and a certain courtier-like delicacy and reserve which appear in the Neapolitan canvas.

“Still more noticeable is the contrast between the garb and austere aspect of our hero, and the exquisite and effeminate decorations of a personage whose physiognomy, very long and lean, differs most widely from the oval and strongly marked face of the Admiral,—an aspect noble, clear, and lit up by genius. Neither the hair which adorns the temples of the Neapolitan figure with symmetrical and elegant locks, nor the whiskers and long beard, nor the curls smoothly arranged, were seen, save in rarest exceptions, in the age of Ferdinand and Isabella, either in Spain, or in Italy, or in other civilized regions of Europe; much less up to the first years of Charles V., could any one meet with a slashed German red cap with plume and gold studs. The same may be said concerning other parts of the attire,—as the silk sleeves hooped by fillets, lace about the hands, gloves, a finger ring, and other refinements which characterize a finished gallant of the sixteenth century.

It may be said that the medal which adorns the cap in the Neapolitan picture is stamped with a ship steering out beyond the pillars of Hercules. Admit that it does, may it not be no more than one of these devices then so much in vogue, and concerning which Giovio, Ruscelli, Cappacio, and other ingenious Italians wrote so many volumes? The vice-king of Catalonia bore as a device the sea-compass; Isabel of Corregio, had for hers two anchors in the sea. Stephen Colonna had two columns painted in the deep sea with a band connecting them, and inscribed *His suffulta!* We could cite a hundred examples of picture restorers destroying accessories and legends, as well as cleansing and retouching audaciously, and for the worse. Who can satisfy us that the Neapolitan portrait has not suffered a similar degradation?”

On the whole, Carderera decides that Parmigiano's painting had no reference to Columbus; but was more probably a likeness of one Giberto de Sassuolo. It may be added, that when Parmigiano

had painted a Venus, and then received a commission for a Virgin Mary, he passed off his queen of beauty, with some trifling changes for the queen-of saints. Nor were Venus and the Virgin more unlike each other than was a finical courtier to any fair setting forth of Columbus.

Equally untrustworthy has one portrait owned by the Duke of Veragua, a descendant of the great Admiral, now been proved. Regarding this work, an eminent Spanish artist says: "Its date cannot be earlier than the end of the seventeenth century; it has whiskers and ruffles which were unknown for more than one generation after Columbus. Nothing more than a copy of this modern fancy is to be seen in the archives of the Indies at Seville, or in the grand engraving published by Munoz." A copy of the Veragua portrait was presented in 1818 to the Pennsylvania Academy of Arts, by R. W. Meade. In the light of subsequent criticism, it turns out a less valuable benefaction than was supposed alike by the donor and by the receivers.

No less unsatisfactory is the bust in possession of the New York Historical Society. It is a fac simile of an ideal in the Protomoteca of the Capitoline Museum at Rome. There was one picture brought out at Frankfort, in 1595, with two warts on the left cheek and a full bottomed wig, by Theodore Bry, a German engraver, who called it Columbus, and claimed that its original had been executed by order of the Spanish monarchs, when Columbus was about starting on his first voyage. At that early period, however, those sovereigns were so far from caring for his portrait, that they shipped him off beyond the sea to get rid of his presence, which was as vexatious to them as the importunate widow to the unjust judge. Besides, in this painting the physiognomy is totally unlike the delineations by the discoverer's intimates. The nose was flat and snub—not aquiline. This mercantile speculation, for it was nothing else, is a Dutch face, and looks as if a Dutchman made it. It is inscribed *Indiarum primus inventor*. Its pretensions have been exploded by Navarrete.<sup>1</sup>

In looking at this Dutch imposture, I am reminded of the tourist, who, when the skull of St. Peter was exhibited in Rome,

<sup>1</sup> HARRISSE, Notes, p. 163. MEMORIAS, Vol. VIII, p. 18, Boletín I, 3, 245.

cried out — “I saw another skull of Peter on my way hither.” “No doubt you did,” said the relic shower, but what you saw was the cranium of Peter, the fisher boy; what I hold up is the head of Peter the full grown apostle!” In any view of the matter, what was the Dutch Columbus who had not yet embarked, to him who had crossed and re-crossed the mighty deep, bearing Christ to the Indies, and the Indies to Christendom. But critics are now agreed that there is no likelihood that any portrait whatever of the great discoverer was painted before his great discovery.

In 1821, Peschiera, commissioned by the city of Genoa to carve a bust which was to stand on a shrine inclosing various autograph papers of Columbus, according to Irving, discarded all portraits known to him, and drew his ideal from ancient descriptions of the great Admiral. His effort gave no permanent satisfaction. His handiwork was ere long supplanted by a second bust, and that in a few years by a third. This three-headed Columbus deserves the name of Cerberus — at least a consecutive, if not a simultaneous, Cerberus.

Disgusted with counterfeit presentments of Columbus, which were counterfeits indeed, the authorities of Genoa wishing to erect a worthy monument of its greatest son,<sup>1</sup> sought all through the world for his most authentic likeness in order to show forth at the entry of its gates, and in its chief place of concourse, the man himself, and not a mockery of him. The results of this research are worth our noting, and the more as they have not yet appeared in English. After long deliberation the Madrid Historical Society advised the Genoese to model their statue not according to any likeness in Spain, as national pride might have dictated, but by the Florentine painting from which Jefferson's copy was made, as well as according to an ancient wood cut, and an engraving, which had been early derived from the same source with that painting.<sup>2</sup>

What was that source? It was the Museum of Paolo Giovio, on the site of Pliny's villa, by the lake of Como. About the

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<sup>1</sup> Carderera, Preface, Boletin, Vol. 1, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Boletin 1, 253. No vacilamos en presentar el retrato de Florencia, y el grabado de Capriolo, como los tipos que pueden suministrar mas datos para reproducir la imagen del insigne Genoves. Carderera p. 11.

middle of the sixteenth century, Cristofano dell'Altissimo was despatched to this museum by the Duke of Tuscany to copy portraits. Vasari<sup>1</sup> relates that before 1568 he had completed more than two hundred and eighty<sup>2</sup> of them, and that they were then arranged in the Florentine Museum. They hang there to this day. Columbus' is No. 397. But whether the face of Columbus was among those painted by Cristofano cannot be proved from Bohn's edition of Vasari, nor by any edition in any language in the Boston Atheneum or Public Library, for I have had them both searched. But all the names are chronicled in the *Giunti* edition, and perhaps in that alone.

Despairing for a while of discovering the *Giunti* edition of Vasari which, half a century ago, was set down in Brunet's Bibliography as "rare and much sought for;" and so of securing the testimony of the only competent and credible witness known to me regarding the origin of the Florentine Columbus, I was all the more delighted to gain the information I desired from Professor Norton, of Harvard University, who wrote me as follows:

"I am glad to say that I happen to have the *Giunti* edition of Vasari. The list of portraits in the *Museo* of the Duke Cosimo occupies three pages and part of a fourth. It begins with Condottieri, who are followed by kings and emperors, these by emperors of the Turks, and other heroes; these by "heroic men," of whom the first eight are:

1. Alberto Duro.
2. Leonardo da Vinci.
3. Titiano.
4. Michael Angelo Buonarroti.
5. Amerigo Vespucci.
6. *Colombo Genovese*.<sup>3</sup>
7. Ferdinando Magellane.
8. Ferdinando Cortese.

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<sup>1</sup> Lives of Painters, vol. V., p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> In some editions the number is set down as two hundred and fifty.

<sup>3</sup> The name *Colombo Genovese* has been at last discovered by Judge Daly in one other edition of Vasari, namely, the Bologna of 1647. He describes it as hid away in a corner, that is "in the appendix to vol. III., signature F. f. f., third sheet back." — Ms. letter of Judge Daly.



The Florentine Columbus then, is not an *original*, though Mr. Jefferson, as was not surprising in his day, had fallen into the mistaken idea that it was. He says: "The Columbus was taken for me from the original, which is in the gallery of Florence. I say from an original, because it is well known that in collections of any note, and that of Florence is the first in the world, no copy is ever admitted, and an original existing in Genoa would readily be obtained for a royal collection in Florence.<sup>1</sup> Vasari names this portrait, but does not say by whom it was made." The Florentine Columbus cannot have been painted later than 1568, when Vasari's notice of it was printed. It may be a score of years older than that date. It must be, if Columbus was among the first portraits copied by Cristofano. Though not an original, it is older than any other likeness can be proved, and probably older than any other one claims to be. Its painter was sent to copy in the Giovia Museum, because there was the best portrait gallery in existence. Giovio had long lavished labor and lucre alike in forming it.<sup>2</sup>

Before 1546, the Giovia Museum had become so famous that it drew things of like nature to itself. In that year, Giulio Romano bequeathed to it a collection of portraits which Raphael had had made from stanzas in the Vatican.<sup>3</sup> Among these were Charles VII, King of France; Antonio Colonna, Prince of Salerno; Niccolo Fortebraccio; Francesco Carmignuola; Cardinal Bessarion; Francesco Spinola, and Battista da Canneto. As the place where works of art would be most carefully preserved, best shown, and most appreciated, that repository might well be considered the niche which such treasures were ordained to fill. Accordingly it is not incredible, that if any art collector left no legacy to the Giovia reservoir, his neglect was judged to be such a proof of insanity as to warrant breaking his will.

Ticozzi has published eight volumes, and Bottari various notices, evincing Giovio's pains to secure authentic portraits. His letters to Duke Cosmo, to Doni, to Aretino, Titian and others,

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<sup>1</sup> Jefferson's Works, vol. VI., p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> Carderera, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Vasari, Vol. II, p. 17.

show solicitude lest some likenesses were not faithful or worthy of faith.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the authenticity and accuracy of his Columbus, he seems to have had no misgivings. Concerning that hero, his first words are *hunc honestissima fronte hominem* — this man with honor so legible on his face. Giovio's residence was not far from his contemporary Giustiniani, whose biographical notice of Columbus antedates all others which have thus far come to light, and who may have guided Giovio to a picture of the discoverer. At the death of Columbus, Giovio was twenty-three years old. He was one of the foremost to recognize the grandeur of the Columbian revelation, and he wrote:<sup>2</sup> "It seems that Columbus is worthy to be honored by the Genoese with a most splendid statue" — *Sic ut Columbus videri possit qui a Liguribus luculentissima statua decoretur.*

While holding this view, and so careful regarding the accuracy of other likenesses, was he negligent regarding Columbus? His museum was situated in a Spanish province; his agents were abroad in Spain, perhaps so early, that if no portrait existed, they could have had one executed. Besides how unlikely, when other honors were showered upon Columbus, and Giovio counted him worthy of the best possible statue, that no one was found to sketch his features, above all since he survived till painters from his native Italy were common in Spain. Chief Justice Daly has furnished me the names of no less than sixteen artists in that peninsula contemporary with Columbus, and any one of whom might have painted him. Those names are as follows: Juan Sanchez de Castro, founder of the Seville school, who survived Columbus ten years; Pedro Sanchez, Juan Nunez, Gonzalo Diaz, Nicholas Francisco Pisan, George Ingles, Frutos Flores, Juan Flamenco, Francisco de Amberes, Juan de Flandres, Juan de Borgona, Antonio del Rincon, Peres de Velloldo, Garcia del Barcia, Juan Rodriguez, and perhaps Pedro del Berrugueto.

One of the portraits painted from life secured by Giovio, in the judgment of Crowe and Cavalcaselle,<sup>3</sup> was that of Mohammed II.,

<sup>1</sup> Carderera, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> In *Christopheri Columbi elogio.*

<sup>3</sup> *History of Painting in North Italy*, Vol. I, p. 125.

by Gentile Bellini. Who will believe that Giovio was more anxious to obtain a truthful presentment of a Turk than of a countryman, of the conqueror of an old city than of the discoverer of the New World? whom he himself styled "*Stupendū alterius et nulli ante saeculo cognita terrarum orbis repertor, incomparabilis Liguribus honos, factus mortalium celeberrimus,*" etc.

The wood cut, which has been already alluded to, was published at Basel, in 1578, to illustrate a eulogy on Columbus that had been written by Giovio. According to its editor, Perna, that wood cut was derived from a portrait in the Giovian Museum, which had been painted from life. His words are these: "I have at much expense employed an eminent artist to engrave the Giovian portraits painted from life" — and, so far as appears, no others than those painted from life. His language as quoted by Carderera is: *Ho mandado dibujar con mucho dispendio a un sobresaliente artista los retratos pintados al vivo (ad vivum), que decoraban el Museo de Giovio.*<sup>1</sup> An ancient engraving in the great library of Paris is inscribed: "From a portrait painted from nature (*peint sur nature*),<sup>2</sup> in the Museum of Giovio, and no other specimen in the vast collection makes that claim. The wood cuts of some other notables in Giovio's book being known to be correct, it is a natural inference that that which represents Columbus is likewise worthy of credit.

It is also asserted by Spanish critics, that a family likeness to the Giovian type as shown in the Florentine copy, and in the wood cut, is clear in most old and famous likenesses, as in the Belvedere at Vienna, the Borghese at Rome, the Cancellieri from Cuccaro, the Altamira, the Malpica, the Naval Museum,<sup>3</sup> the Villa Franca, and the Yanez in Spain.<sup>4</sup> From the last of these, bought from Yanez of Granada, in 1763, by the Government, and now hanging in the National Library, your present was painted.

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<sup>1</sup> Carderera, p. 15. The Basel edition in the Library of Congress bears a date three years earlier than that given by Carderera, namely, 1575.

<sup>2</sup> Lareusse.

<sup>3</sup> Carderera, p. 11, note.

<sup>4</sup> Carderera, pp. 18 and 24. The projecting lower lip and curved nose of the present Duke of Veragua, a lineal descendant of Columbus, resembles the Giovian prototypes.

The engraving where Columbus holds an octant in his hand, was first published at Cologne, in 1598, by Crispin de Pas [Pasaeus]. When critically examined, it also turns out to be nothing but a free imitation of the Giovian wood cut, which came out in Basel twenty years before.<sup>1</sup>

The portraiture I have last passed in review are the more reliable, because they show the person of Columbus as we have it described by his own son, as well as by his contemporary, Oviedo; that is, face large and ruddy, cheek bones rather high, nose aquiline, eyes light, hair blonde in youth, but at thirty years old already white.<sup>2</sup> It would seem, however, from all his pictures, that he must have dyed his hair,—or artists of old, as now, may have loved to show a man still at his best and fullest.

In the list of Giovian portraits copied by Cristofano, Columbus stands between Americus and Magellan. He who disputes the authenticity of Columbus, must push his skepticism further, unless the features of Americus and Magellan are confirmed by other evidence. If they are, they heighten the certainty that the Columbian likeness is likewise truthful. The Swiss wood-cut of 1578, antedates all others; yet it is by no means in good preservation. Accordingly, the Roman drawing by Capriolo, published in 1596, with another from Cucarro, and the painting in Florence,—the original of yours, as many critics say,—were recommended by Spain to the Genoese as the best models in form and features of the countryman whom they most delighted to honor.

Thanks to these archetypes, some what idealized it may be, his native city, in 1862, completed a monument to Columbus, designed by Canzio,<sup>3</sup> which puts to shame our ridiculous figure by the Neapolitan Persico, perched on the capitol steps at Washington, in 1844, where he who gave us our Continent is clad in a sort of mail not invented at his era, and standing with the globe poised

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<sup>1</sup> Carderera, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Carderera, p. 7. *La cara larga, las megillas un poco altas, la nariz aguilena, los ojos blancos [garzos Herrera] y il color encendido, etc.*

<sup>3</sup> A picture of this grand Genoese tribute to Columbus may be found in Henry Harrisse's *Notes on Columbus*, p. 182.

in his hand like a nine-pin ball, seems ready to bowl it through an alley.

The grand Genoese statue of Columbus represents him leaning on an anchor, and America sitting at his feet. Not far off there is an inlaid tablet inscribed :

*Dissi, valli, credi! Ecco un secondo* Bancroft Library  
*Sorger nuovo dall'onde ignote mondo.*

“ His wish, his faith, his word; from unknown surges.

Behold a second world, new found emerges! ”

The crowning statue on the Genoese monument was first ordered from the sculptor Bartolotti, or Bartolini, who shortly after died. It was then given to Freccia, who had but just finished a rough model when he became a maniac and died. From his model, however, it was finished by Franzone and Svanascini, of Carrara. A good authority also assured me, that “ for the features they relied upon a drawing made from a portrait hanging in the palace of the Duke of Veragua at Madrid, a descendant of Columbus. The Duke had the drawing made, and sent it to Genoa for that purpose.”

This statement was made in a private letter from John F. Hazelton, United States consul at Genoa. I wish it were correct, for the principal portraits in the possession of the Duke of Veragua are first, one painted from the Cucarro<sup>1</sup> likeness, which is a descendant from the Giovia portrait through the Capriolo engraving; and secondly,<sup>2</sup> a copy from the likeness in the National Library (Biblioteca Nacional), the identical Yanez from which our copy was obtained. The Consul was, however, misinformed. A letter from the Duke of Veragua himself assures me, that the Genoese, when building their Columbian monument, *did not consult with him at all*. The Duke's words are : *Los artistas de Genova no me consultaron quando se construjo el monumento a quelle se refiere*.

Though so many Columbian portraits point to Giovia's Museum as their mother, and bear a family likeness, as in scale, attitude and material, and the eyes in all look to the right, they dif-

<sup>1</sup> Carderera, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ms. letter from Duke of Veragua, January 25, 1883.

fer in accessories, especially in costume and hair, as well as in expression, ranging from sad to cheerful. The wood-cut and the Florentine copy are so divergent in dress, though the features are alike, that recent critics hold that Giovio had *two* Columbian likenesses. The costume in the wood-cut corresponds to what the curate of Palacios,<sup>1</sup> Andrea Bernaldez, saw Columbus wearing in June, 1496, namely, a dress in color and fashion like a Franciscan friar's, but shorter, and for devotion, girt with the rope of a cordelier.

The costume, in your gift, strikes men now exactly as the actual garb of Columbus struck the Spanish curate. While your Columbus was being framed here in Madison, every person who came into the shop said to the workman, "What Catholic priest have you here?" In the era of Columbus it was a popular faith that no one was sure of salvation unless he died in a religious dress. The religiosity of Columbus was as great as that of any man —

— "Who to be sure of Paradise  
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,  
Or in Franciscan thought to pass disguised."

He was, in fact, buried at Valladolid in the monastery of St. Francis, and that in the habit of a Franciscan friar.<sup>2</sup> But as a sailor's garments were then like a Franciscan's, some hold that Columbus chose to be so painted with allusion to what he had himself achieved as a sailor. What costume so befitting the great admiral as that in which, as is most probable, he really stood on his fore-castle during the night, when he united forever the two hemispheres hitherto always disjoined?

The genuineness of the Giovian portrait is argued from its dress being similar to the Franciscan friar's frock. A portrait in such a costume, it is maintained, would never have been admitted among those of Americus, Magellan and Cortez, with other military heroes, unless known to be either original or copied from

<sup>1</sup> *Vino el Almirante en Castilla en el mes de junio de 1496, vestido de unas ropas de color de habito de San Francisco de Observancia, en la hachura poco menos que habito, y con cordon de San Francisco por devocion.* Carderera, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Carderera, p. 19.

one indubitably drawn from life. The dress also points to a Spanish origin, because Italian artists already insisted on tricking out their personages — even contemporaries — in the robes of Ancient Romans, as Malone improved the bust on Shakspeare's tomb by whitewashing it all over.

One point in the Columbian investigation, namely — what has become of the one or more most ancient portraits which adorned the Museum of Giovio, has been strangely neglected. One investigator, however, Carderera, states that the collection was divided between the families of two Giovian counts, the descendants of whom are still residing in the city of Como. Something of it remained in 1780, when a letter from Giambattista Giovio to Tiraboschi described its relics, which, according to Crowe and Cavalcaselle,<sup>1</sup> continued undispersed to the very close of the eighteenth century. It is possible, then, that research about Como may be rewarded by the discovery of a Columbian likeness which shall become as famous in its line as the Vatican Codex is among Biblical manuscripts, — yes, as pre-eminent as that Codex would stand if the Alexandrian and Sinaitic codices had never existed.

In 1763, a portrait of Columbus, with those of Cortez, Lope and Quevedo, was purchased from N. Yanez,<sup>2</sup> who had brought it from Granada, by the Spanish Government. No trace of any such picture having been at an earlier period in the Royal Picture Gallery has been detected. So long was the revealer of the Western Hemisphere unappreciated in Castile and Leon. This Yanez likeness was hung in the National Library [Biblioteca Nacional] and soon confessed by art-critics to resemble closely in features that in the Florentine Uffizi — the oldest of known date, and that from which Jefferson's copy had been taken. It was highly praised by Navarrete,<sup>3</sup> in his grand work, which is a nobler monument to Columbus than the labor of an age in piled stones.

But Spanish artists were long ago satisfied, that the Yanez portrait had been tampered with by some audacious restorer, and they at length obtained permission to test it with chemicals.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> History of Painting in North Italy, Vol. I, p. 126. London, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Boletin 1. No. 3, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> Same, p. 253.

<sup>4</sup> Boletin, vol. 1, No. 4, p. 327.

From side to side of the upper margin of the picture there ran the legend CHRISTOF. COLUMBUS NORI (sic) ORBIS INVENTOR. These words were first subjected to the artist's test, and as they vanished, quite another inscription came out beneath them, namely, the words COLOMB. LYGUR. NOVI ORBIS REPTOR (sic). The variations not only proved that the likeness [had been repainted, but that the second painter was inferior to the first, since *reptor* means to find by seeking, which *inventor* does not. The testers had no hesitation about proceeding further. The flowing robe with a heavy fur collar, as they said, "more befitting a Muscovite than a mariner," vanished, while a simple garb, only a closely fitting tunic, and a mantle folded across the breast, rose to view. The eyes, nose, lower lip, facial oval, all assumed a new expression. The air of monastic sadness vanished.

Senor Cubells and his assistants, who had begun their work nervously, finished it with glad surprise when they beheld the great discoverer throwing off the disguises that had been thrust upon him; and, as it were, emancipated from the chains with which he was bound in his lifetime, and which were buried in his coffin.

"As if he whom the asp  
In its marble grasp,  
Kept close and for ages strangled,  
Got loose from the hold  
Of each serpent fold,  
And exulted disentangled."

A copy of this resuscitated Columbus was painted for you, and it forms the present which you bestow on the Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Carderera, the great Spanish authority on Columbian portraits, regrets that while sojourning at the lake of Como, he had neglected to search in all highways and byways for the likeness that stood in the Museum of Giovio there, and which may be still lurking in some unsuspected corner. Friends of mine, now traveling abroad, have promised to spend time and money in making such research.

But some Spanish investigators hold that labors in this direction are needless. Signor Rios y Rios, in a recent Bulletin of



the Madrid Academy,<sup>1</sup> maintains that the long-lost and much de-siderated Giovian portrait — the prototype of which all Colum-bian likenesses of any value are copies, has been found already. He holds that the Yanez portrait is nothing less than that Giovian jewel. He adduces many circumstances which serve to thicken other proofs of his position that do demonstrate thinly. Let us trust that this discovery of the great discoverer, which was as unlooked for as his own discovery of America, may prove as un-dubitable.

In the Yellowstone National Park there are springs strongly impregnated with mineral matter. In one of these, if a man be immersed, as we dip a wick to make a tallow candle, he soon be-comes marble all over, through and through,— in a word, his own statue. It has been suggested that this wonderful spring should be utilized as an economical mode of immortalizing members of Congress, and procuring statues of undisputable accuracy for filling the temple of glory which has been opened in Washing-ton. Our superabundance of statesmen would thus be reduced, as many a celebrity might be led to speedy suicide, in order to be seen by posterity still at his best and fullest.

However this may be, it cannot be sufficiently regretted that these wonder-working waters were not discovered by the discover-er of America. In that case we might have had his own form and features eternized in a prototype — yes, an autotype beyond all question or cavil; and, best of all, one that would never need to be *whitewashed*, at least not in the Washington sense of the term.

Certain New York spiritualists, having secured the aid of Leonardo da Vinci, profess to have just supplied the world with the first authentic likeness of Confucius. It may be they will produce a Columbus with claims to accuracy which will rival what you bring us. But outside the gallery of spirit-art you need fear no rivalry.

Our special thanks are due to you, sir, for this genuine like-ness, because so many counterfeits are abroad. We thank you

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<sup>1</sup> Boletín, I., 3, 253.

the more because it is still disputed, and perhaps doubtful, where the ashes of our great voyager now repose.<sup>1</sup> It is claimed in Cuba, that those remains were transported to that island in 1796; but San Domingans assert that they then, with pious fraud, delivered up only sham relics, while retaining and secreting the véritable treasure. Be this as it may, and though every bone of Columbus shall turn to dust, till the world can boast no hair of him for memory, thanks to Giovio and his artists, his face, his form, his habit as he lived, triumph over death, and, enshrined in our Historic Hall, thanks to you, they shall become as familiar as household words to the people of this Commonwealth, where you have served as Chief Magistrate longer than any other man. In the new and noble Gallery now in preparation for our pictures, your benefaction shall close the grandest vista. ESTO PERPETUA!

NOTE.—Having begged information regarding the portrait of Columbus now in the New York capitol of Dr. H. A. Homes, the State librarian, that gentleman has brought to my knowledge several interesting particulars which have long lain, as it were, buried alive, in the Appendix to the Journal of the New York State Senate for the year 1850, pp. 788-792. The substance of the details there given is as follows:

The Columbian portrait given, in 1784, by Maria Farmer to the Senate of New York, was accepted with grateful acknowledgments. At that time the city of New York was the seat of the State government, and when, in 1797, the capital was removed to Albany, this picture was left behind. It seems to have been forgotten, and continued neglected or abstracted for many years.

On the 26th of March, 1827, however,—thanks perhaps to the publication of Irving's biography—it was resolved by the Senate in Albany, that the Maria Farmer portrait of Columbus be removed from the city of New York, and put up in some suitable place in the Senate Chamber. Accordingly, the clerk of the Senate visited the city of New York, and, after considerable search, discovered in the garret of the city Hall, and identified, the Farmer portrait. Onward from that era this picture has hung either in the Senate Chamber or in its ante-room, and for some years over the fireplace, so that it became much warped and injured. Hence, in 1850, it was "restored without changing the picture," by New York artists, and came to be regarded as one of the principal ornaments of the Senate Chamber.

Leisler, from whom the Columbian portrait had descended to Maria Farmer, had visited Europe, traveling over all its countries. While abroad, he probably procured this portrait, and that from some one of his kindred,

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<sup>1</sup> Los Restos de Colon, Madrid, 1879.

if Mari Farmer's statement that it had been in her family as early as 1630, be correct.

The date, 1592, inscribed on the portrait, is interpreted by the author of the Appendix as by me, to denote the year in which the picture was made, or copied; and the figures "Aet 23" to signify the age at which Columbus is represented, and that at which he first went to sea. In the background of this work a vessel is painted just sailing away from a small sea port.









